White Passports to Dancers

*432. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a troupe of Bhangra Dancers from Punjab was given white passports to visit Germany in September, 2005 to perform under a cultural exchange programme;

(b) whether the antecedents of the members of the troupe were checked before issuing the white passports;

(c) whether more than half of the members disappeared after a few performances and still remain untraced by German authorities; and

(d) whether the German Government has issued a note of concern and if so, Government of India's comments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) As is the usual practice with cultural troupes sponsored by the ICCR going abroad to perform under cultural exchange programme, the Bhangra troupe was issued official passports.

(b) ICCR had verified professional antecedents of the troupe members.

(c) Out of the 15-member Bhangra troupe, nine members disappeared in Germany. The Indian Mission in Germany had immediately reported the matter to the concerned German authorities who are proceeding in the matter.

(d) No note of concern was received from the German Government.

Agreement of scientific collaborations

*433. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) with how many countries the bilateral agreements of scientific collaboration and exchanges have been signed;

(b) whether these agreements permits the scientists and academicians from these countries to take up medium or long term faculty positions and research assignments in the academic and research institutions in the Country;